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HELEN GRAY

489 . f. 1628 .



HELEN GRAY;

OR,

COME AND SEE.

BY

J. W. M.,

AUTHOR OF "ALICE LOWTHER," "MARY M'NEILI,"
ETC. ETC.

EDINBURGH:
JOHNSTONE, HUNTER, & CO.

1877.

EDINBURGH :
PRINTED BY M'FARLANE AND ERSKINE
(late Schenck & M'Farlane,)
ST JAMES' SQUARE.



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CHAPTER I.

IT was a dull grey afternoon, when the grim visage of winter seemed to be prematurely dogging the steps of the reluctant golden autumn—a discontenting sort of day, neither bracingly cold, nor pleasantly bright—sunless and spiritless.

So at least young Mrs Gower felt it, and not less so her sister, Miss Gray. They had been out, and apparently exhausted

How dull everything seems, aimed Mrs Gower. "I'm afraid I'm mooping dreadfully here at this season of the year. I almost wish I stayed on another month at Strathpeffer."

"Oh," answered Miss Gray, "I'm tired a little bit; shopping always fatigues me, and somehow the air is unaccountably oppressive and close."

"I hope it's not going to thunder here sister, rousing into something of interest. "If there's one thing I don't like, it's thunder, and I'm sure we've had enough of this season. What with the storm at Strathpeffer, it was

sparkle in Edinburgh as the season advances?"

"Oh! of a kind there is," said Mrs Gower; "but it is ponderous rather—heavy dinner-parties, and occasional *soirées musicales*, where you mustn't speak, and if you don't understand Beethoven or can't go into raptures over old Bach's *gigues*, you are voted an utter ignoramus. I would rather have one day of the Kürsaal at Baden, than a whole yearful of *fugues* and *pavanes* and what not at the parties here. However, *you* are sure to shine in that magic circle with that magnificent voice of yours, and delicious touch, so we shall probably come in for a little more *éclat* than my tame performances have ever secured."

"How intensely Douglas enjoys music," said Helen, after a pause. "It is quite delightful to sing and play to him, and how splendidly clever he is, Alice! He seems to know about everything—languages, composers, artists, authors; and not in a superficial way either, but intensely. In his own profession, too, he is rising so rapidly.

That clever Mr MacAlister last night spoke most enthusiastically of his talents and success."

"Oh! he really does know everything," said the young wife, with a gratified smile. "But then, he's always plod-plodding. I seldom see him—never all day; and when he does stay in the drawing-room now and then, as he has been doing since you came, he makes up for lost time by sitting up in his study far on into the night."

"Why don't *you* sing to him?" asked Miss Gray, with an eager look; "if I had such a glorious man for my husband, I should be only too proud to devote myself to him."

"Me! Oh! he doesn't care for my playing. Nothing short of perfection pleases him."

"He used to enjoy your playing, Allie, at home, before you were married."

"Ah! but that was a *very* different thing. Mark my words, Helen; a man *before* you marry him is one thing—*after*, quite another. If I had known as much two years ago as I now do—what the wife of a

professional man has to put up with, of slights and neglects, and one thing and another—I don't know if I would——”

But before another word had passed the pretty pouting lips, a hand was laid upon them, and a disapproving voice exclaimed: “Hush, Allie, do not say it. Douglas would not let a reproachful word of *you* pass *his* lips. He is too generous—too noble to allow a thought even, of disloyalty to you, to find a resting-place in his mind. Neglect! slights! Why he treats you with an indulgent kindness such as one could hardly conceive compatible with a life of such incessant brain-work and toil. To think of him hurrying down yesterday from the Parliament House in a brief interval, to assure himself that the headache you had brought on by your own wilfulness, was no way aggravated, and to be received as he was with such petulant words and grumbles. It is too bad of you to treat him as you do. I am ashamed of you thoroughly.”

An oppressive silence ensued. Miss Gray, whose really incensed feelings against her

sister had been smouldering for days, and who had at last spoken out so sharply, made no attempt to soften her words. Mrs Gower meanwhile swung herself in a would-be *nonchalant* way in her rocking-chair.

Helen Gray was her married sister's senior by nearly three years, and ever since their mother's death had held the reins of government in her father's house with—it must be confessed—a somewhat tight hand. Mr Gray, still in the vigour of life, rich, and influential in the northern English county in which his beautiful manor stood, had not, for several years after his wife's death, contemplated the idea of bringing any step-mother among the by no means gentle tempers of his family. A year, however, before the date of our story, while travelling abroad alone, he had come under the fascination of a young and pretty face, the owner of which, a companion to a querulous old lady, had been only too glad to exchange the severities of her dependent lot for the freedom and position of the elderly squire's wife. Her *entrée* into the English home was like the fall of a shell into an

enemy's camp, and the explosion was terrible. The two sons betook themselves respectively, the one to his rooms at Oxford, and the other to his ship at Portsmouth; while Charlotte, a high-spirited girl, was despatched to school. Helen, on whom the blow fell heaviest, and who found herself, in this twinkling of an eye, superseded by a "young person" of her own age, determined for her father's sake to remain. He was so dismayed at the dispersion of his family, and so annoyed at the pretentious manner which his young wife immediately assumed, that Helen stayed and ministered to his comforts in a way which only she could do. A very gratuitous and malicious interference, however, on the part of her step-mother, in an *affaire de cœur*, which ended, as Helen assured herself, in "disaster to her earthly hopes," snapped the external link of courtesy, which was all that bound the two together, and Helen craved her father's leave to pay a promised visit to her sister in Edinburgh.

"Cousin Fanny, you angel!" exclaimed Mrs Gower, starting up as the old butler

announced "Miss Charteris," and rushing towards that lady, "you blessed creature, to come out in this wretched day to see us. Helen and I have just had a good fight, and are sulking respectively, as you may perceive. I literally had no one to speak to."

So saying, she plunged "Cousin Fanny" into a cosy seat by the fire, and flung herself at her feet. "And what have you been after to-day?" she rattled on, scarcely giving time for Helen to speak, or for any greetings to be exchanged. "How many mothers' meetings have you engaged in—that's the word, isn't it? and what number of halt and maimed have you picked up? and, oh! Cousin Fanny, you look so sweet and pretty, I do love *you*" (with rather a rueful glance at her sister); "you don't sit down and lecture and scold me as Helen does, and always did, you angelic darling."

"Alice, how absurd you are," said Miss Gray, over whose face, however, there stole a smile. "Cousin Fanny, you are really very good to tolerate such manners."

Miss Charteris smiled, and Mrs Gower was quite right when she said there was

something peculiarly sweet and "dear" in her smile. Below the middle height, she was exceedingly neat and lady-like, with the most beautiful fresh colour, and a pair of soft dove-like eyes, while her manners were characteristic of high breeding and refinement. She was perfectly at home with her young relatives, and they had the most affectionate feelings towards her. Their mother's favourite cousin, she had, during her lifetime, and ever since, been a frequent visitor at "The Manor;" and now that Alice was settled in Edinburgh, she took almost a mother's place in the care and interest she bestowed upon her. She had caught up, and continued their mother's prayers for her children, and she believed these prayers would all be answered.

Douglas rejoiced in her influence over his wife, though he had no atom of sympathy with her religion. She occupied a high social position in Edinburgh, and he liked and was proud of the relationship.

"I have been altogether *getting* to-day," said Miss Charteris, in answer to Alice's quizzical question; "I have been at a meet-

ing held by the American evangelists, and have just come to tell you about it."

"You mustn't expect *us* to say as certain persons do, 'how interesting,' 'how touching,' and that kind of thing; you know *I* never go in for such talk, and no more does Helen," said Alice. "But what did the people do? Fall into hysterics, and cry and laugh by turns?"

"It was a most impressive and interesting service," said Miss Charteris, earnestly; "and they are to hold meetings every day, and evening meetings, too, probably."

"What a fuss to make," said Alice. "But what possible pleasure can *you* have in going, Cousin Fanny, you who are as good as gold, and never could be better or nicer?"

"And," struck in Helen, who was very intellectual, and spent, as a rule, a certain number of hours daily in study, "is it not a dreadful waste of time going to so many meetings?"

"If one left other duties undone to attend them, it would, I think," said Miss Charteris; "but one would willingly save or get time from ordinary leisure hours to

go. You do not know how delightful they are."

"Ah! here comes Douglas!" exclaimed Helen, as he entered the room; "come to see you, Cousin Fanny," she added, gaily.

"Yes," said Mr Gower. "I always recognise your umbrella when I see it on the hall table, and am only too glad to know you are here."

Miss Charteris responded heartily to the warm greeting, and pleasant general conversation for a few minutes followed, after which she took her departure.



CHAPTER II.

IT was not the first time M
teris had come away with
ing that her visit was
ne, as to any impression for good
roduced ; yet the benefit of such
course was really great, drawing their
er young relations ever more loving
er, inclining them to appreciate
had, even though they had not

going. But somehow Helen's mind was full of other thoughts than dressing, and she sat down by the fire, revolving and re-revolving in her wise head the problem which was filling all her thoughts, "Where is rest or true happiness to be found?"

That she should find it in her sister's new home she had assured herself; yet where was the realisation of the bright picture she had drawn of a pure and happy home?

It might, she had often felt in bygone days, have been in her own home, *but* for the dark trial which had suddenly snatched from their midst the worshipped mother, and had robbed their home of its joy. *But*, too, for the passionate temper and selfish disposition of Alice, who had resented her control, and had embittered poor Helen's life. *But, now*, for the crushing blow which had fallen so heavily, since the dainty but domineering foot of their stepmother had crossed their threshold.

But in Alice's home the case—she had assured herself—was very different. With such a clever husband, full of admiration

and devotion to his beautiful Alice ; so indulgent besides, that—Helen had flattered herself—even Alice's temper must have become angelic, and her selfishness must have been turned into a wife's devotion ! Alas ! the rose colour in which Helen had dipped her brush and painted her sister's home picture was all rubbed off, and only a blurred black tint remained. Helen—intellectual, self-contained Helen—accustomed to control and endurance, writhed in spirit at the dismal realisation of her ideal home and happiness. She gazed into the fitful flames, as if for some explanation of her problem, but she only seemed to read off in lurid characters the dreary fact that nowhere in this jarring restless world is to be found that satisfaction and repose for which she pined. She missed nothing to which she had looked forward in the luxurious house—the society, the charm of her brother-in-law's company. Yet there was a jar, a troubling discordance, always striking through the music of this domestic scene. Whence came it ? and what was to be done to tone it into harmony ? She

blamed Alice severely. Her exaction and haughtiness, which in the mad days of courtship had been to Douglas expressive only of piquancy and freshness of spirit, were—now that his time was so filled—irritating to the last degree; and the kind care for her comfort he was ever manifesting was often, she could perceive, more the result of habit and innate chivalry than of affection. The small wedge of domestic dispeace had already inserted itself into the home of this young couple. Now was

“The little rift within the lute
Which by-and-by would make the music mute!”

Douglas could not be expected to go on like this. His strong will, which was so generally under control, was even now giving indications of resentment; the sarcastic taunt would some day leap up into a passionate reproof or reproach.

“Mrs Gower is dressed, miss,” said her sister’s maid, entering the room.

“O Pringle, I shall be ready in five minutes,” said Helen, roused to action, and

... an handsomely dressed, with
id's soliloquised encomium as Miss
tened to join her sister in the dra
m.

Douglas has only just come in
med Alice, impatiently ; " kept l
reeting of counsel."

The dinner-party was a lively o
st so Helen thought, as she lister
cultivated conversation and clear in
marks of some of the party, while
ove to strangle yawns behind her fan
at she called "the prosy havers"
erly member of the bar who led l
ner. Douglas shone, his sister-i
ught, like a star above even this

she sat in a quiet corner observing them, and listening to their talk.

Their hostess, Mrs Howard Lee, was a distinguished looking woman, dressed in black velvet, with a cool critical eye, accustomed evidently to lead, and with slight toleration for any element of opposition. She was very thin, and pale, with a noisy satirical voice which it made one shiver to hear. "Shrill"—Helen voted her—and this monosyllable characterised the woman. "Have you heard, Mrs Nepeau," she began addressing a lady, who sat some distance from the ottoman in the centre of the room on which Mrs Howard Lee had enshrined herself: "Have you heard of the disaster that has befallen our friends, the Dalrymples?" All eyes were directed ottoman-wards, as Mrs Nepeau answered with a nervous look, "I heard that Lewis had been thrown from his horse while hunting in India, but they did not anticipate any serious result."

"Oh!" interrupted Mrs Howard Lee, with a curl on her lip; "it is something infinitely worse, and nearer home?"

looked on by Mrs Lee's share

Clara has been attending to me in the Assembly Hall, and how well I don't know what to call 'Mouthy'—if one may coin a word. Was there ever such infatuation on the part of parents allowing

How President Bush said Mr. ... had not ...

1. The first step is to identify the problem. This involves understanding the current situation and what needs to be changed.

"Nor you, Lady Pears, I am sure?"

"Certainly not," said that stout personage. "Most certainly not."

"Nor you, Mrs Spencer?"

"Yes," replied that lady, "I have, and I only wish you, Mrs Howard Lee, and all the ladies would come and hear these earnest men. Their meetings are the most stirring and interesting I have ever witnessed, and the good they are doing in our city is incalculable."

Helen, from her corner, instinctively fixed an eager look on this young married lady, who, in the face of such evident hostility to this movement—whatever it might be—yet ventured so decidedly and warmly to state her views.

What was it that made Helen's heart leap out to this Mrs Spencer, and long to hear her speak again?

"Has anything amiss happened to Miss Dalrymple," said Mrs Halkett Brown, in a timid tone of voice.

"Has she gone mad, or anything?" struck in Mrs Fitzgerald.

"Clara!" exclaimed Mrs Spencer, "she

here. She helps me at a m
ing I have in the Canongate."

"Clara Dalrymple at a mot
in the Canongate!" exclaimed
Lee. "The dashing, hands
was, turned into a miserable j
fanatic, going into these den
abomination too; why, she
catch small-pox, and then w
be? I really don't think it'
Mrs Spencer, to risk her so!'

"It was her own earnest
me," answered Mrs Spencer,
I believe we, both of us, feel
the greatest blessings of ou
honoured to do such work.

Mrs Halkett Brown, who from her debatable ground, seemed timidly anxious to know something more about these remarkable proceedings.

Mrs Spencer glanced at their hostess, who, pretending not to have heard the request, again plunged into the controversy.

"What has brought these Yankees here, I should like to know? Have we not enough of ministers of our own?"

"Apparently not," said Mrs Spencer, "or at least these evangelists are the match to set on fire the steady work of preparation which, in the hands of our faithful ministers, has been going on for long!"

"A match into a powder mill," said Mrs Howard Lee, "and a pretty explosion they are making. I wish they would leave us in peace, and go home. I am sick of this ferment."

"Oh! Mrs Lee," said Mrs Spencer very earnestly, "you mistake—indeed you do—the character and aim of these devoted men. They have no other object at heart than the salvation of souls."

Helen Gray; or,

am told," said Mrs Fitzgerald, "that say at these meetings, that any one—*one* who is hearing them, and who may gone in with the sins of a *whole broken* dialogue on his head may become a good stian at once before he leaves. Surely is erroneous teaching, and ought to be down. Why, it takes months and years, times all one's life, to become really , and fit for heaven."

his clenching conclusion to the whole er, as it was evidently meant to be, was wed by a momentary silence. Helen ed her quick eye towards Mrs Spencer, e face betokened surprise, but no con-

that man's soul was the storm on the lake when our Lord lay sleeping. He arose and stilled the tumult, and there was a great calm. Jesus—His word—Himself the Saviour—that is the message these men are preaching."

"Well, well! we don't want a committee of the Assembly Hall here, I am sure," said Mrs Howard Lee, annoyed at the turn the conversation had taken, and the evident interest which Mrs Spencer's "views" had created; forgetting too, as such persons ever do, that she had herself introduced the subject. "We have had enough of Moodyism, let us have something cheerful now. Mrs Gower, will you favour us? A song, or one of your brilliant pieces, or anything you like." And having established Alice at the piano, Mrs Howard Lee, as was her custom, was soon plunged into an animated colloquy with Mrs Fitzgerald about some private theatricals which were to come off next evening at that lady's house.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN the gentlemen entered the drawing-room, Helen marked a momentary pleasure which shone in her brother-in-law's eye as the sound of his wife's music fell upon his ear. But she noticed too how it changed his bitter look as Alice instantly rose and declined to play any more.

Douglas turned on his heel, but presently returned to the piano, leading Mrs Spencer, who, without fuss or preamble, seated herself, and kept Douglas rivetted at her side. Her playing was perfect in style and execution, and her performance was listened to with an appreciative silence, very flattering to the pianist. Helen followed, and the rich tones of her magnificent voice thrilled every heart with their impassioned music. Her most effective song was a "prayer to the Virgin," supposed to proceed from a heart wearied with life, or craving to be released from the burden of mortality, and taken to the Virgin's arms. It was really the language of poor Helen's heart, and the object of the prayer was more real to her than she would have chosen to confess.

"Is Miss Gray a Roman Catholic?" asked Mrs Fitzgérald of Mrs Halkett Brown.

"Very High Church, I believe," answered that lady, who knew nothing whatever of Helen or her beliefs.

"Beautiful, was it not, Mrs Spencer?" said Douglas, who gloried in Helen's voice.

"Delightfully sung."

"But—what——"

"I don't like the subject," said Mrs Spencer, decidedly. "We Protestants have nothing to do with prayers to the Virgin."

Douglas laughed, and Helen, who overheard the remark, turned to Mrs Spencer, and said, "It is such a help to think that a *woman* hears us, and sympathises with us."

"A mere ideal help, surely," said Mrs Spencer ; "a hope without a peg to hang upon. A fancy could never give me a shred of comfort."

"It is far more than a fancy to me," said Helen, her eyes kindling with animation ; "our lots like our temperaments seem very different. Your face so bright tells of a happy, honoured life. My existence is useless to every one, and most burdensome to myself. It is easy to be happy and *good* too," she added, with emphasis, "when all is prosperous. But to a weary spirit even a fancy may soothe. Why be so cruel as to try to darken this one sunbeam in my leaden sky?"

When Helen found herself free in the quiet of her own room to think over the

incidents of the evening, she was conscious that the figure which stood out prominently in her mind's eye was that of Mrs Spencer. Personally, in face and manners most attractive, there was over and above, the fascination which a fearless, yet unostentatious, decidedness of character exerts over a wavering and aimless spirit. Not that Helen lacked decision in all intellectual and social matters ; she was in all such bold as a lion. But just at present, as regarded views of life, its obligations, its responsibilities, and, to go a step higher, as regarded her true condition in God's sight, and the way in which she was to propitiate His favour, and to live a life befitting an intelligent creature of His hand, Helen was at her wit's end. She was quite clear that this was what she longed for. She was in a maze as to how to set about achieving it. Mrs Spencer had evidently got into a good line of life. She looked happy. She had plenty to do, apparently, and no doubt did it well, and to purpose. She had chosen this unworldly path when she was young and handsome, and from her experience of

its satisfying nature, seemed most desirous for others to join her in it. And she had as good as told Helen before they parted, in touching words, that *she* was on a wrong track, and that the sooner she shook herself free of the Virgin, and penitential works, and *self*, the better for the welfare of her soul. Whether or not she had in so many words said all this, Helen could not assure herself; the influence upon her could not have been greater if she had.

Poor Helen! she had had her full share of the world, with its gaieties and pleasures; mingling with these were her intellectual pursuits and passion for music, but something still was amiss. Her place in her own old home was supplanted, and her high hopes regarding Alice's new one were more than disappointed.

“ The pale, pale moon arose to-night;
Its cold light fell on her silent floor;
And she thought of a face so pure and white,
That vanished in years that will come no more.
Oh ! pale sweet face, sweet face, I said,
Come sit by the window still, as of yore,
Oh ! pale sweet face, so dear and dead,
Come look from the moon on my silent floor.”

As Helen breathed these words, she rushed to the window, and stretching her hands upwards in the cold moonlight, cried in anguish, "Mother, mother! come back to me; speak to my bursting heart to-night!" She leant against the open window with upturned eyes, as if, in the perfect stillness of the hour, some breathings from the spirit land might be caught. Suddenly the low strains of music were heard, and Helen tried to still her beating heart to listen. Was it the sweep of a golden harp, or the rustling of an angel's silvery wings speeding towards her? No; it was the soft sweet blending of two human voices as they sang together these words, each one of which fell clear and full on Helen's strained ear:

"Come to the Saviour, make no delay;
Here in His Word He's shown us the way;
Here in our midst He's standing to-day,
Tenderly saying, 'Come.'
Joyful, joyful, will the meeting be,
When from sin our hearts are pure and free;
And we shall gather, Saviour, with Thee,
In our eternal home."

Helen stood rivetted till the faintest

sound had passed away. A soothed feeling stole over her, such as the touch of a kind hand on our burning brows will give. Had her mother spoken to her through these strange sweet words? She would know them again should she hear them, and the music too. And she fell asleep with them in her heart.

Next day Helen was moody and ill at ease; the incident in the moonlight had passed from her mind. Mrs Spencer, too, seemed forgotten. Something very different was filling all her thoughts. This pre-occupation was caused by a letter received in the morning from her intimate friend Nanette de Vaux, who had been for some months in a Roman Catholic hospital in Germany, and who wrote, as she had often before done, urging Helen to join her there. She assured her of the satisfaction which a life of such renunciation entailed, and of the high repute in which she would be certain to be held by the "Church." Her appeals fitted in with the cravings and cries of Helen's heart. Her resolution to join her friend, which had

been gathering strength for many weeks, was taken now ; and, without further reflection, she determined to go. She wrote to her friend, acquiescing in her wishes on her behalf, and begging to know when she could be received into the "Sisters' Training Home" for this special work. She went through the drizzling Scotch mist which hung over the city to post her letter, and felt that a great weight was lifted off her mind, or at least ought to be. But all the evening she had troublesome pricks of conscience tormenting her, as when thoughts of her father and home duties forced themselves before her. But she tried to stifle them all by reiterating to herself the assurance that she was wanted nowhere—needed by none—and that at this present juncture such an opening to escape from worldly troubles and temptations was quite miraculous !

She called the step she was deliberately taking self-denial ; her friend called it crucifixion to the world. Was it not really cowardice ? a weak shrinking from the duties and trials of her appointed lot ?



CHAPTER IV.

DAYS passed slowly on, and more than time had elapsed when an answer from Germany might have come. Helen became listless and dull, and Alice, by her temper and discontent, kept on making her home as unquiet as ever. Douglas was absorbed in his profession, and, except a stray dinner-party at this unfashionable season of the year, there was little to interest or amuse. The letters from home—when any did come—were querulous and cold; and the broad hints which poor Helen received to prolong her visit, convinced her how undesirable her presence at the Manor was. She grew daily more restless and impatient.

At last, one morning the post brought the longed-for letter from the superintendent of the Sisters' Training Home, informing Helen that her pious wish to join them was received and welcomed, and that within a fortnight she might start.

Helen believed herself happy ; and, after writing to the superior, promising to make her appearance at the stipulated time, and to her father to acquaint him of the step she had taken, she repaired to the drawing-room to break the news to her sister, whom she found in her usually very excited condition, after her morning's visit to the cook. She was just prefacing her announcement by sundry reflections on the aim of one's existence, and the imperative call to self-abnegation and mortification, when the door opened and Miss Charteris walked in. She had not seen her young relatives for several days, having been shut up with cold, and quite unchilled by their want of attention to her, she "just looked in" to assure herself that they were well. A glance at Helen's pale face, and Alice's crimson cheeks, told her plainly that something was

wrong ; and she knew she should very soon hear of Alice's troubles.

"Helen has just been telling me," said Mrs Gower, "that she thinks if people would do more for themselves, they would be happier. Clean their own grates, I think you gave as an illustration," glancing at her sister. "How one's hands would look on the piano and guitar, after such an exercise, I leave you to judge, Cousin Fanny," she added, looking into the bright true face before her.

"Of course," said Helen, with dignity, "one must go through difficulties and disagreeable work, before one can reach the goal of perfection," she added, in a lower tone.

"I'd take some other work than grate-cleaning, all the same," persisted Alice.

"I don't agree with you," said Helen, whose thoughts were in the hospital, and the miscellaneous occupations there. "The more against the grain a thing is, the better the doing of it will make one."

Miss Charteris, whose quick perception had caught from much in Helen's conversa-

tion the bent her mind had been taking, said, quietly :

"What puzzles me is, if people will invert the order of their position—if ladies, for instance, choose to become housemaids and nurses—why they should prefer working for strangers rather than for their own relations. If Helen should be seized with a conviction, that to use her hands in cleaning grates and making broth will improve her state morally, why not begin operations with your grates, Alice, and give me a turn now and then? And as to the nursing, a capable person would find scope for her powers in the circle of her own friends. There is something spurious at the root of such a system of things."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Alice; while Helen, who had not at the moment a reply ready for such an unexpected thrust from Miss Charteris, sat silent. "Now, listen to *me*, Cousin Fanny," said Alice. "Do you know of a good laundrymaid? Our new one won't dry the clothes in the green, because she says it's too small—of course we can't enlarge it for her convenience—and last

Helen Gray; or,

nt we thought she had set the house
fire by overheating the laundry to dry
n there. I hate the Scotch way of
ng up things at home. And the cook
o wasteful, and they all speak up so,
answer you back. Really, we feel
e as if we were boarders in our own
se than masters; and only think what
y Pears told me the other night, she
her new cook had left without any
ning, because in her last place she
been accustomed to a rubber at whist
ry night; and as Lady Pears only keeps
e servants, she didn't like playing
mbie."

them?" asked Miss Charteris, with heightened colour.

"Oh! dear no, she wouldn't go; and she said she would think very little of any one who would."

A strange sensation passed through Helen, as she hastily exclaimed, "Alice, how rude you are, when Cousin Fanny goes, and that nice Mrs Spencer"—she had almost forgotten her existence till now—"likes them. Are they clever? Do you think I would like them?"

"Come and see," answered Miss Charteris, very tenderly.

"Perhaps to-morrow."

"No, dear, to-day."

"Well, I shall," said Helen, thinking of her letters which she wished to post herself; and as she ran upstairs to dress, she said mentally, "It can do me no harm, and will please kind Cousin Fanny."

"What is all this?" whispered Helen to Miss Charteris, as they elbowed their way through a thickening mass of people, and with no small difficulty reached two vacant seats in the front row of the gallery of the

Assembly Hall. "*What* a crowd ! I'm so glad we came in such good time," she added, gazing out upon the sea of faces before them. "Oh, there is Mrs Spencer down there."

"She helps with the singing," said Miss Charteris.

"Who is that girl sitting next her?" asked Helen ; "what a fine intellectual face she has?"

"Clara Dalrymple," said Miss Charteris.

"That !" remembering the object of pity she had been made out to be by Mrs Howard Lee ; but before Helen had time for any more comments, Mr Moody entered—followed by a large number of gentlemen—and took the chair.

The dropping of a pin could have been heard in the hushed assembly.

He gave out the hymn, "Come to the Saviour," and Mr Sankey, who presided at the organ, led the singing. As with a magic touch, the incidents, and emotions too, of that night when she had first heard these words, flashed before Helen's mind ; and as the bell-like tones of Mr Sankey's voice

sounded out each word in perfect clearness, thoughts of her past life, and of her mother, filled her heart.

A gentleman next read the requests for prayer, and as each new request was announced, silent prayer was offered.

Then Mr Moody spoke, and the rapt attention of the great assembly was very striking. He made no conventional introduction to his subject, had no "heads." A single passage from the Word of God was read ; this day it was, "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord."

In a few burning sentences he exposed Cain's sin, and appealed to many hearing him if they were not so many Cains ! They were bringing their offerings—their good deeds—to God, as an acceptable and sufficient offering. They were willing to be servants, but not sinners. They were presenting the meat-offering before they had been cleansed by the burnt-offering. "Some of you are meditating a 'religious life,' perhaps, a life of self-denial and devotion. Well, see that you begin at the right end.

Everything in a journey depends
start you make."

Miss Charteris stole a glance at
who sat with her eyes rivetted
speaker; the red flush was in her
pale face, and a look of eager inquiry
over her whole countenance.

After Mr Sankey and the choir had
"There is Life for a Look," the meeting
declared "open," and an elderly gentleman
rose. He said he must bear his testimony
to the great blessing, these meetings
being made the means of, to many
self the minister of a large congregation,
he told how he had lately been
overwhelmed with a deep sense

in Edinburgh and London, he resolved to visit them in succession. Freed from work, and with time on his hands, he came one day—although at first prejudiced against them—to these meetings. Mr Moody's heart-stirring, yet most reviving words, had gone straight to his heart, opening up first the exigencies of his case, and then pointing him afresh to the fountain of life. Again and again he had come, and was here this day to bear personal testimony to the great blessing he had received. "My health," he added, "is improved. I feel braced for my work, and ready to return to it hopefully and thankfully. I have written to my wife and family to join me here, and pray God that they may get a share of that blessing which is being so abundantly poured out here."

Mr Sankey then sung "The Lord will Provide." "We have ten minutes still," said Mr Moody, when a gentleman rose, and told of a rough miner who had been attending evangelistic meetings, and was roused to the deepest concern about his soul. Night after night he repaired to the meet-

ing, and remained among the inquirers, to be spoken to about his soul. One night he stayed after all had left—he could not see the light—and after much earnest conversation and prayer with the patient friend who sought to point him to the Lamb of God, he was urged to go home. “I cannot,” was the blunt reply—“I cannot till I find Christ.” His friend resolved in the same spirit as the troubled soul himself, to watch and pray with him until the dawn should break in upon the darkness. Together they wrestled, until at last light broke in upon his spirit, and with the simple faith of a little child, the strong rough man was enabled to cast himself believingly upon Jesus. In a most sweet and relieved frame of mind he went home. Next day, while working in the mine, an explosion took place; he was smothered in the *debris*. As they groped about for him, removing the rubbish above and about him, a voice was heard saying faintly, but so gladly, “Wasn’t it a good thing it was all settled last night?” They were his last words.

And now Mr Sankey sang the closing hymn, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," every note and syllable of which seemed caught up by the hushed, listening crowd. Helen drank it in, as the parched earth absorbs the shower; and when the last line was being sung—that line which has stirred so many souls,

"Too late, too late, Jesus of Nazareth *has* passed by"—

she bowed her head upon her hands. The crowd began slowly and very quietly to disperse, and when Helen raised her head, there were few left in the hall. She was outwardly calm, but as she passed her hand into Miss Charteris's, and warmly pressed it, she said, in a voice full of suppressed emotion, "Thank you for bringing me."

That was all, and Miss Charteris forbore to put a question or hazard a remark. She merely returned the pressure of the little trembling hand, and went out of her way to see Helen home. On parting, she said, "Will you come again to-morrow?"

"Oh! so gladly," answered Helen; "and bring Alice with me."



CHAPTER V.

HELEN flew to her room, fearful lest any should follow her, and, locking the door, sat down, agitated and anxious, to think over the strange event of the past hour. She lived them all over again, recalling the calm yet earnest air which had pervaded the scene—the refuge sort of feeling in that hall—the crowds, and yet the stillness—the rapt attention with which Mr Moody's words were listened to—the hold they had taken of *her*—the anxiety with which they had filled her, and yet the hope they had dropped into her heart. The picture he had drawn of her empty, craving, yet self-sufficient spirit, by its vivid and yet simple truthfulness, stirred

her very soul. Side by side of that was the assurance he had given, on the testimony of God's own Word, that then and there as she sat she might be saved—satisfied; while the reaction which had clouded this gleam of hope, when the closing words of Mr Sankey's hymn,

“Too late, too late, Jesus of Nazareth *has* passed by,”

fell like a bolt of fire upon her heart. All this passed with lightning vividness before her mind. In a whirl of perplexity and distress, she exclaimed, “What must I do?” She could not tell, only she fell upon her knees; and cried, “O Jesus of Nazareth, *pass me not by!*” Then she read from her mother's Bible, turning eagerly to the passages which the loved hand had marked—passages fragrant with the name of Jesus; and as she read of His love, His readiness to receive sinners, without a word of reproach, hope again rose within her, and she cast herself, as she was, upon His grace and love. It was a groping in the dark, but it landed her at the foot of the cross.

Blessed resting-place! as Helen, in her happy experience, found it to be.

"Where is Helen?" asked Douglas, one Saturday afternoon, a week or two after the events recorded in our previous chapter.

"At Cousin Fanny's," answered Alice, scarcely noticing her husband's entrance into the drawing-room at this unusual hour.

"Has Cousin Fanny cast her glamour over Helen as she does over every one?" said Douglas. "Well, she couldn't be in better company, but all the same, I wish she were here. It is such a glorious afternoon for a walk, and she is such good company."

Douglas had all the wish to ask his wife to accompany him, and she had a secret longing to go, or at least to be asked; but the breach between them had widened so that each was too proud to risk a possible refusal.

"You seem spell-bound by that grim novel," he went on, with a slight sneer. "How many on a moderate average do you overtake in a week?"

"I have *time* enough," said Alice, bitterly

settling herself in the couch, "to get through a good quantity! It hangs heavy enough, and I have no horses here. When life in its reality is bleak and drear, what better can one do than steal a little sunshine from books, that tell of bright day-dreams realised?"

"Time and the hour wear out the roughest day," said Douglas, in a tone of suppressed mortification; "but I am sorry you are so weary—would you——"

"Oh, spare your pity, I do well enough!" interrupted Alice, dropping her eyes on her book. Tears, however, would glisten on the long dark eyelashes, and an unutterable longing filled her heart to be done with this bitterness, and to throw herself into her husband's arms, and tell him how she craved for his love. But the same terrible pride kept her back—the opportunity passed and was lost.

"Any one might be cheerful with Helen for a companion," said Douglas, still hankering after his wife, and unwilling to leave her to her self-imposed solitude. "Do you read aloud together, or what?"

"Oh! yes; and she practises—*rhymes* over these things you like so much. She was a whole hour certainly this morning at one special piece to have it ready for you. She rises at the cock-crowing, I am sure, to get everything she has to do properly done before she starts."

"Starts—what do you mean?"

"For these meetings in the Masonic Hall—no, Music or Assembly Hall, I can't tell which."

"How early does she go?"

"She has to be there at twelve o'clock, but she leaves at half-past ten?"

"Nonsense, she would never take so long to walk to all the three places you have named."

"She does, though, and she walks fast enough in all conscience."

"Has she ever taken you?"

"Taken me, indeed! Thank you, no. Not but that she has asked me often enough."

"You prefer spending the time with Miss Braddon"—glancing at the book in her hands—"or some equally intellectual and elevating company."

The sneering words and involuntarily curl on her husband's lips, seemed to rouse the slumbering passion in Alice's heart; she blushed furiously, and flouncing up, exclaimed, "You are very, *very* unkind to me; you don't care a bit what I do with myself, or if you never see me all day long, or what becomes of me, all self—self—so different from the happy days at home. Oh! I wish—I *wish* I had never seen Edinburgh, or—or——"

But in a moment an arm was round the slender waist, drawing her gently towards him. Such kind loving eyes looked down into her angry ones, as might have softened the hardest heart. But Alice flung him off, her whole face distorted with passion, and shaking herself from the tenderest human shelter which woman can possess, dashed out of the room. She threw herself upon the bed in her own apartment, and wept hot passionate tears, moaning out, that she "had often wished to die, and had assuredly got her death-blow now, and that at her husband's hand! *She* could live no longer the victim of such hardships and neglect." But life, especially young life, is not so

D

easily extinguished, and by-and-by her passion cooled. There was no one to see her, or remonstrate, or soothe her sorrow, and gradually she calmed. She heard the hall door close quietly, but firmly, and knew that Douglas had gone out. She had counted on him coming to comfort, or perhaps coax her out of her angry fit. She did not know him, or dream that under that cold, pale exterior there lived a nature, the most sensitive and affectionate, a heart wrung to anguish by her conduct, and yet smarting under a sense of the injury she had inflicted upon him. As he strode along through the busy streets, out into his quiet, solitary country haunts, none guessed what a dire storm had burst over his home—what ruin, as he assured himself, had swept away his fondest, dearest hopes.

Ah! how little do we know as we brush against one another in the crowded thoroughfare, or exchange friendly greetings, what aching hearts beat beneath the courteous manner, or what crushing anxiety and suspense are veiled by the offhand, careless salutation!

When the little party met in the evening at dinner, all outward traces of the matrimonial collision were gone. To Helen's experienced eye, however, there were unmistakable symptoms of what was, alas! too common an occurrence now in that unquiet home. She was always looking under the surface of things; hunting up, as it were, what was genuine amid spurious appearances.

A general feeling of abstraction seemed to pervade the little company. At last Douglas roused himself to say pleasantly:

"Well, Helen, and where have you been hiding yourself all this afternoon?"

"I have been at Cousin Fanny's," answered Helen.

"Assisting, I presume, at what the Spanish call a *tertullia*—namely, tea, talk, and turn out—eh?"

"Not exactly," replied Helen, smiling; "we were practising some of Mr Sankey's hymns. Mr Sankey was there himself, and gave us a lesson both practically, and in theory, as to how they should be sung."

"Ah!"

"He has a beautiful voice, and his articulation is perfect," continued Helen, kindling into interest as she spoke. "You would enjoy hearing him, Douglas."

"With all my heart, if he will sing in the oratorios, or better still, at the opera. I've no time for any public music elsewhere. Besides, I'm so well off at home just now, that I am quite independent of more. I hear you've been practising that new *gavotte*. Will you come and play it?"

"With pleasure," answered Helen, accepting her brother-in-law's gracefully-proffered arm. He had intended going to the club this Saturday night, had Helen gone out. As it was, she kept him rivetted to the piano. He was a perfect enthusiast in music of the highest class, though critical and intolerant of less brilliant performance; and Helen, whose altered views, and deep longings for the spiritual good of her sister and brother-in-law, seemed to quicken her perceptions, resolved that no efforts on her part should be wanting to maintain the hold over them—Douglas especially—which this gift of music had achieved. To secure

leisure for practice, now that her time was so fully occupied, she should have to rise early, earlier even than it was her usually active habit to do ; her buoyant spirit rose with the emergency.

"Now," said Helen, brightly, after she had sung and played to her brother-in-law's entire content, "let me sing you something new before we stop," and she lifted a copy of Mr Sankey's hymns, and placed it before her. She had been praying and watching for such a quiet opportunity, and now that it had come, she felt so anxious to avail herself of it, that she trembled, lest by her very emotion she should awkwardly spoil it, or lose it altogether.

Without any response or encouragement from either of her auditors, she sang, "Room among the Angels." Alice, who appeared absorbed in her work, was deeply affected, but did not speak. Then followed, "Go, Bury thy Sorrow," and the closing one, "More to Follow."

There was a touching tremulousness in the rich tones of Helen's voice, and the words were uttered fervently and clearly.

over her troubled spirit. She would have Helen to sing them over again when they were alone, but now she said not a word.

Douglas politely thanked his sister-in-law with rather a bored look, and Helen was discouraged by her supposed want of success. She had quite wasted her opportunity she feared.





CHAPTER VI.

NEXT evening the sisters were alone, and Alice asked Helen to sing "the pretty things" over again she had liked so much. Surprised at the request, Helen obeyed, interspersing the singing with incidents of the meetings, and drawing out Alice's interest in the matter quite unconsciously to herself. She had repeatedly asked her to accompany her to the meetings, and had as often been snappishly refused. Alice's quick eye had, however, been very observant of her sister during these past weeks, marvelling most at the softened manner and quiet rejoinders to her pert remarks. The tendency to "lecture" seemed on the wane. She was

silent when Alice burst into a temper ; and although she always took Douglas's part against her irritating, selfish conduct, she seemed now "more sorry than angry," Alice thought ; and "that sort of thing" told more effectually on the spoilt girl than any amount of "lecturing" had ever done. Altogether, Alice felt her heart drawn more tenderly to her clever sister than it had ever been, and she was more ready to listen to her advice.

Night after night the singing went on, to Alice's great enjoyment, and the sweet strains floated now and again into the stillness of the busy lawyer's room.

At last, one morning, when Helen was leaving the room to prepare for the noon-day meeting, she turned to her sister, and, passing her arm round her waist, said, coaxingly :

"Alice, come with me to-day."

"I was just wondering if you were never going to ask me," said unreasonable Alice.

"O Alice," said her sister, unable to restrain a smile, as she recalled the number-

less vain attempts to induce her she had made.

"But," said Alice, "Mrs Howard Lee almost made me promise never to go; she hates them so."

"Almost; but you did not," exclaimed Helen.

"Well, no; just because I would not gratify her; she's so domineering; but people—other people too—say they are queer."

"Never mind what people say," urged Helen; "as Cousin Fanny said to me, Come and see? I thank God, who put it into her heart to make me go."

"Will Mr What's-his-name sing these pretty things to-day?" asked Alice.

"These or some others equally sweet," replied Helen.

"Well, I think I'll go for once—just once—to hear him sing. But don't expect me to hurry out another day at eleven, remember."

Having managed—thanks to Helen's familiarity with the scene—to get into good seats, Alice gazed about her, surprised at

are in this place that one knows, and Alice. "Why, there's Mrs Childering Lady Applejohn ; and, goodness ! the Mr Halkett Brown edging in behind that fat gentleman ; and that sweet Clara Rymples down below ; and there's friend Mrs Spencer. How often do we meet in a day now ? And oh ! the Douglas's friends, the Haigs, and the clever advocate, Mr Bremner. Dear what a place for seeing one's friends ! I hope they won't all see *me*. It's awkward in a place like this ; but they don't seem to be looking this way."

And now all was hushed as Mr M entered, and Mr Sankey took his place.

her sister. "I could stay here for ever listening to him."

She did not seem to hear any of the speakers who followed, but when Mr Sankey again touched the notes of the organ, the roving, restless eyes fixed themselves upon him, and she listened eagerly.

This time the hymn was, "Jesus the Water of Life will give." Each word struck out with bell-like clearness, and seemed, as Alice afterwards said, to knock at the door of her hard heart. Some aspirations heavenward went up, and when the closing hymn, "Gates Ajar," was sung, poor Alice, overpowered at this sound of the Gospel brought so very near to her, trembled under the power of her emotions. She had come into this hall careless—hard—with not a thought of anything beyond the music she wished to hear, but something more than a sound of music had entered her soul. Every line had been like a hammer driving home a nail to her conscience—a tumult rose within. Something was wrong about her—something was wanting, she knew—what could it be?

more and more
very bright, but there was no talking—
bustle nor excitement ; the vast mass
people moved out, impressed evidently w
the solemn work which had engaged the

“There comes Mr Sankey!” exclaim
Alice ; “how I should like to speak to h
just to thank him for——”

“Should you,” answered Helen, quick
“Let me introduce you ;” and as Mr Sanl
approached, Helen suited the action
the word, and the next moment Alice
her gushing way, was pouring out
thanks.

“I am glad you liked them,” answer
Mr Sankey, in his courteous way.

“Oh, so much, especially that al

still vainly trying to quench your thirst at the empty cisterns of this world?"

Alice reared her head, and retreated a step in the empty corridor.

"I merely wanted to thank you for your delicious songs," she said.

"And I long for my songs to waken some echoes in your heart," answered Mr Sankey. "I sing of His mighty love, and I want *you* to be able to sing of it. Whatever your lot, you need a Saviour. He has been offered to you to-day. He is knocking at the door of your heart now. Do not," he added, very earnestly, "keep Him standing outside."

"Is He?" asked Alice, under her breath. "How do you know?"

"He says so Himself. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'"

"Well, I will think about all this," said Alice, thoughtfully, moving to go.

"But, while you are thinking and hesitating, the unclean spirit, who, it would seem,

has left your heart for a season, may come back, and finding it empty and swept, he will enter in with seven other spirits, and your last state may be worse than the first."

"I'm not a—heathen," at last burst out Alice; "you speak as if I were. I'm not good, I know, like Helen now, and Cousin Fanny, but I'm not so bad as to have evil spirits and that in me?" And Alice, as she spoke, flushed crimson with excited feelings.

"You are in one or other of two conditions," said Mr Sankey, very earnestly.

"What? How?"

"You are either *under the curse or under the blood*," and bowing respectfully to Alice, he disappeared.

"A regular Yankee," said Alice to Miss Charteris and Helen, as they passed through the quadrangle. "Just a little too free and easy, asking questions of perfect strangers like that."

"But it was you, dear, who sought the interview," said Miss Charteris.

"But it's quite a different thing thanking him for his songs, to being lectured and catechised about——"

“About?”

“Oh! about whether you’re a good Christian or a bad,” said Alice; “what’s his business? And,” she added, rather ruefully, “I’m afraid he thinks I’m very wicked. He told me if I didn’t take good care I’d soon have a whole host of evil spirits in me. It really was rude to say such dreadful things to—to—a lady.”

“O Alice!” said Miss Charteris. “If your house were on fire, and you were fast asleep at midnight, would you be angry if a kind friend plucked you rudely from your slumbers, and dragged you from the flames to a safe place?”

“Certainly not. I should only be too grateful when I came to know what danger I had been in.”

“Well, dear, to be the means of saving souls is the great aim and desire of these devoted men. They have been themselves plucked as brands from the burning, and are safe in the arms of Jesus, and they long and labour and pray to bring others into the same safe hiding-place. They have left their country, their homes, their friends,

Helen Gray ; or,

are travelling through the world to tell the story of Jesus and His love."

Mildred's generous spirit was touched, and a tumult was in her heart, of very mixed and miscellaneous emotions, but clear and vivid. Her mind's eye rose the memorable words, "You are in one or other of the two conditions—you are either under the curse or under the blood."

She could not get rid of them. They had burned in upon her brain. She saw them in the signs over every shop they entered—she heard them from every voice in the busy streets—all day long they haunted her, and at last they made her *think*.

"Helen," she said, as they left the dining

the crowded hall. The scene was more impressive than anything Alice had ever imagined. The glow of eternity seemed resting over it. Men and women appeared animated as by one great anxiety; solemn transactions were taking place between their souls and their God. The name of Jesus was to them above every name.

To see Mr Sankey, and ask him to explain his hard saying, was the one wish of Alice's heart in going there that night. There were many earnest words spoken, and Alice noticed many in tears around her, the only manifestation of the deep emotion which was filling these anxious hearts. But she could not have told over again what were the subjects of the speakers, so entirely was she absorbed with these words which Mr Sankey had spoken to *her*, and so feverish was her desire to hear more from his lips.

"What are all these people waiting for?" she asked of Helen, at the close of the meeting.

"To be spoken to in the inquiry-rooms," answered her sister.

"Ah!" said Alice, with a look of intelligence ; "Helen, *I* want to wait."

"Do," said Helen, greatly surprised, but not choosing to show it. "I shall join you in the corridor in half-an-hour."

At this moment Mr Sankey passed in front of the moderator's gallery, where the sisters were.

"Mr Sankey," said Alice, eagerly bending over, yet nervous at the sound of her own voice, "may I come and speak to you again?"

He looked up with a kind smile of recognition, as he answered, "Certainly."

"What did you mean by saying to-day that I must be either 'under the curse or under the blood.' I have thought of nothing since. Do help me, and tell me."

"The Word of God," replied Mr Sankey, "says, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.' Take the ten commandments, and try your life up to this moment by them. Have you kept them perfectly in thought, word, and deed?"

Alice thought, and then said : " Oh no ! I've been selfish and bad to Douglas and—and——"

" And what about *God* ?" interrupted Mr Sankey, gently. " Have you loved Him always with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and strength ?"

" Oh no, no !" replied Alice ; " but one cannot surely do them all."

" ' He that offendeth in *one* point is guilty of all,' " said Mr Sankey, solemnly reading each passage from his Bible ; " ' and the soul that sinneth it must die.' "

" O Mr Sankey !" cried Alice. " Does the Bible really say all that of *me* ?"

" Of every one," he replied. " According to your own confession, you are under the curse, a stranger to the love of Christ."

" Oh yes ! what am I to do ?"

" Get under the blood without a moment's delay," said Mr Sankey, in a tone of deep earnestness.

" How ? I do not understand."

" It is plain you can do nothing to save yourself," answered Mr Sankey.

"But I will try," said Alice—"oh! so hard—to be better, Mr Sankey."

"But what about the past—the sinful, irrevocable past. What is to be done with the terrible catalogue of your sins already standing in God's book, ready to convict you at the judgment day?"

"God will have mercy," said Alice.

"He is *just* as well as *merciful*. He cannot pass by the guilty," said Mr Sankey.

"Mr Sankey, *what* am I to do?" said Alice, in deep distress.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' 'What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' Jesus has paid the whole debt. His blood has been shed to procure pardon for sinners. *You* have nothing to do, in order to obtain pardon, but to believe on *Him* who hath finished the work of salvation."

"That is what you mean," exclaimed

Alice, as light streamed into her dark troubled soul. "That is what Jesus does when He goes after the lost sheep—the wandering silly sheep. That is just me. Oh! if He would bear me on His shoulder. Will He, Mr Sankey? Am I not too bad, too long and utterly bad, for Him to have anything to do with. If I might only hope." She fixed her full wistful eyes upon Mr Sankey as she spoke, and waited for his answer, as if life and death were on his lips.

"I have read to you the words of God, and His only," said Mr Sankey; "words, it is true, of terrible threatening to the soul out of Christ. Hear this other message, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' Jesus is yearning over *you*—knocking for admittance into *your* poor heart. Will you not let Him in?"

"Oh yes," said Alice; "I will go home at once and pray to Him to come in."

"Nay, ask Him now; you will go home

Helen Gray.

the lighter if you leave your burden
n."

Here?" looking round ; but those w
not gone to the inquiry-room were
orbed in their own solemn work th
e noticed them.

Yes, I tremble lest Satan, coming
r heart while it is yet empty—that
istless—should enter in. Get the Lo
is into it—He will keep it." Then I
key, in a few earnest petitions, in eve
of which Alice with her whole hea
ed, prayed the Lord Jesus to gath
soul into His fold—to wash her in F
blood, and to enable her to put h
t simply in Him. As he ceased, Al



CHAPTER VII.

THAT night Helen and Alice knelt side by side, as they had not done since they prayed together by their mother's knee. It was a sight over which the angels rejoiced. Is it only a fancy that the sainted mother, whose faithful hands had dropped the seed into their young hearts, hovered over the sacred spot?

The water-pots had been filled with water, the Holy Spirit had now turned that water into wine.

It has been urged by objectors to this great work—a work so real in its nature and its results, that, as one has said, “candid doubt could seldom live long in the atmosphere of these solemn meetings”—it has

been objected that the change in the so-called converts is too sudden to be the genuine saving change.

“To the law and to the testimony.” Is this work in harmony with the Scriptures? Do we find in the converts of the present day the marks and features which characterised the converts in the days of our Lord and His apostles?

Let us examine the Bible record of conversion, and glance at one or two of its cases. In each of these we find the same essential points, although the circumstances of each may be entirely different. These essentials are, the sense of need on the sinner's part—this conviction being taught him by the Word of God, in the hands of the Holy Spirit—and an application to Jesus for pardon; while the power of His great love constrains them to a life of “new obedience.” Each one of these vital points is found in larger or smaller degree, in the case of each genuine convert of the present moment, varying according to the circumstances and temperament and previous training of each. As there are no two per-

sons born into the world with precisely the same features or form, so there are no two cases of spiritual birth identically the same. The great Spirit does not repeat Himself. In His variety there is unity, and perfection in the variety of each. And He is sovereign in the means He uses ; now breathing on a soul, as the gentle breeze ruffles the bosom of the quiet lake : or again stirring and shaking the very roots of a man's being, as the hurricane sweeps through the mighty forest trees. Thus on Lydia's heart the Spirit gently breathed as she listened at the river-side to the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles ; while the Philippian jailer, startled at midnight by the earthquake, sprang terrified to the disciples, crying, "What must I do to be saved ?" Again—See Zaccheus climbing into the sycamore tree on the impulse of curiosity, and at the call of Jesus coming down a repentant, believing man ; and behold the subject of a fiercer conflict in Saul of Tarsus, across whose persecuting path a light from heaven shined, and into whose startled ear the Lord from heaven spoke ; who, as he fell to

the ground blind and helpless, exclaimed, "Lord, what wouldest Thou have me to do?"

And yet once more, for the time would fail us to multiply illustrations. Look at that figure, shrouded in his cloak, stealing away at night through the hushed streets of Jerusalem, out to the quiet house at Bethany. What is the secret errand of this great man—this ruler? Ah! he has listened that day to His teaching, who "spake as never man spake." His words have reached down into the great craving of his soul. He must hear more. Nicodemus "came to Jesus by night," and from His own lips learned that to see His kingdom he must be born again.

And finally—Behold the thief on the cross. What but a sudden conversion, as it is called, could have availed him? There he was, slowly dying the cruel death of crucifixion. But his glazing eye was fascinated by the majesty and meekness of the patient Sufferer at his side; and, like the centurion, he felt "truly this is the Son of God." A sense of his own demerit filled

him, followed by the conviction, that it is the Saviour of the world he sees; and a cry for mercy bursts from his parched lips. His bold faith is tenderly met, and the blessed words fall upon his strained ear, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise. To have spoken to such a man of gradual conversion, of repentance, or godly sorrow, and how much of each he should have, would have been to mock him. Why, his life's blood was ebbing at each flying moment; his grave was dug; he was on the brink of eternity. What he needed was a present Saviour. Nor would he ever be able to prove the genuineness of his conversion to those cautious souls who wait for proof of the great change before they will believe in it at all. He was never to come down from that cross alive; his hands were nailed; his poor feet were pierced. Ah! but his soul was saved—his pardon was spoken—and methinks his service in the golden city will be all the deeper and more adoring, because the luxury was denied him here of serving or suffering for his Lord.

cross, and compelling
laborious way. Enough surely t
soul be brought to Jesus, by v
means, or in however brief an hou
there, our jealousy must cease. S
that resting-place, the most pain
protracted repentance, the most
penance, the most elaborate and ex
good deeds, are but so many mesh
net which the poor votary of Sata
for himself, and in which he wil
find himself enclosed by the “
lies.”





CHAPTER VIII.

FOR Helen Gray, life had taken a new colouring. She had now a new hope—a new purpose—a new and noble aim. Hitherto, her soul, gazing around in the world, had seen traces of a justice which looked like cruelty ; and turning heavenwards, the great silence there looked like indifference ; and a sense of lostness and loneliness had filled her being. As a last hope, she had—as the reader has seen—resolved upon a “devoted life,” as the one means left her to propitiate the justice which alarmed her, or extract one approving word from that silent, speechless heaven ! Ah ! now that she had got spiritual sight, she awoke to the fact, that all

Helen Gray; or,

life she had been the recipient of messages from the God of heaven; that around her, and within her, the gracious hand of His providence had been touching her; in spring and autumn, in the budding bud and the sweeping storm, in sickness and health, in hope and in fear. Now He had spoken to her by His Son from heaven, by Him whose call is ever "Come," and whose look has always a welcome in it. Her soul had listened to that call, and had leapt into true life.

She availed herself of every privilege and opportunity within her reach, both for her own soul's growth and for the good of

anxious points connected with her daily life, ever holding up Jesus as the way, the truth, the life, in all present duty as well as in all hope of glory.

For without Christ the best and most earnest life is but a frame without a picture—a casket without a jewel.

A great softening of heart and manners was to those around her the most noticeable change in Helen Gray.

Her energetic nature had been active and stirring enough always, and there was little fear that her energies would be cramped, because her aim was changed. But the consciously clever woman had become not less clever, although immensely less so in her own eyes. She had everything, she felt, to learn in the school of Christ, but she had a love and hope within her which sweetened and sanctified her life. *The Lord Himself was in the heart of it.*

Her love and care for Alice were very touching. She blamed herself in severely exaggerated form for her hard, unsisterly conduct towards her; and when she watched the true and prayerful efforts which her

eager impetuous sister now daily put forth to be a meek follower of the Saviour she so truly loved, her heart was often full to overflowing.

"You see, Helen," Alice had said when declining to do some work for which she felt herself quite unfit, "*I must begin at home, with my temper and my neglected household.*"

And many a stumble and slip she made, but the steady progress went on; and in her frank, fearless nature the gracious change was even more marked than in her quiet and self-contained sister.

Besides having a spirit full of energy, Helen enjoyed strong vigorous health, and she was able for much more exertion than Alice could attempt, with her more delicately-strung constitution. Helen was up with the lark, and feeling that "the first hour of the day is the rudder of the day," she devoted its early freshness to prayer and to the study of God's Word. She attended a "Theological Class for Ladies," designed to aid in the study of the Bible and the doctrines of Christianity, and for

which a large amount of reading was essential. She prosecuted her music ; and for all such studies the early spring mornings were delightful. One of the pleasantest hours of the day was that spent at "Cousin Fanny's," where a party assembled to practise Mr Sankey's hymns. Their object was to become familiar with them, so as to be able to sing them to invalids, or others. Clara Dalrymple's uncle had surgical wards in the Infirmary, and several went regularly there to sing ; others went to the different hospitals, and to the dismal-looking House of Refuge, being everywhere received with the warmest welcome.

Alice had a special love for this work, and the Infirmary was her chosen sphere.

She went regularly with Clara twice a week, and the poor sufferers watched for her visits with an expectation which it cheered her to see. She was like a bit of sunshine flitting in among them with her basket of flowers, arranged in small bouquets for each, speaking to them with her own natural cheerful voice ; now telling them some incidents of the meetings, or

the singing! so pure, so musical, their very hearts, while the melody was, in the case of some first Gospel invitation to which yielded. No wonder that a nurse from the adjoining wards stole in or that requests from more patients came, begging them "to take it before they left.

The day was filled with busy work, and both sisters felt that they had been so happy.

One morning, some weeks after the crisis in their lives, Helen and Anne together, lingering over their morning

come. And although I *am* trying to be different, perhaps he doesn't know; and I *ought* to tell him how dreadfully sorry I am for all the past, but it *is* difficult—you don't know how I have distressed and troubled him."

"Yes, dear, I do," answered Helen; "and I quite think you should."

She knew how Douglas had been observing his wife's altered ways, but this out-pouring and confession were right and due.

As Alice stooped to kiss or rather hug Helen, she whispered, "Oh, if *he* could but see and feel as we do, but he doesn't; and he won't come with us to the meetings. I have asked and begged him."

"Let us do our part meekly," said Helen, resting the beautiful head in her arms; "God will do His, in answer to our prayers."

"Oh! yes, He will—He will," said Alice, with a bright, reassured look. "Now we must get ready for the dear Barclay lecture. Nothing helps me so much as these 'Pilgrim days;' and Mrs Spencer will be here directly."

housemaid, came carelessly on, knocking violently against her, upset the contents of her tray, her pretty dress, splashing besides, and stair-carpet in a pitiable way.

"Oh!" exclaimed Alice, starved and provoked, "you"—some angry words on her lips, and her temper rose in fury. But before a word more was said, she was gone—fled to her room, where, kneeling, in an agony, she prayed her Saviour, into whose keeping I have committed my temper, oh, help me now to be quiet." Presently she was back on the stairs, where the terror-stricken maid was trying to lift the shattered

again ;” and she stooped and helped to mop up the brown stream.

Jane was petrified. What ! was this the same imperious being whose passionate fits had been such a frequent cause of discomfort in the house ? Yes, no other, but so blessedly changed ; and so impressive was the effect of the change upon the maid, that it was the turning-point in her own spiritual history. There was a felt reality in a religion that could work such transformation.





CHAPTER IX.

THAT same evening Douglas sat alone in his study ; his mind was in a strange state of excitement and perturbation, and all his efforts to banish such sensations and apply himself to his usual occupations were unavailing. One thing that kept uppermost in his thoughts, was the remarkable change which for the last few weeks had become apparent in the spirit and temper of his dear little wife. She had grown so gentle, and considerate, and sweet, that his heart was drawn to her with even more than its first love ; and whereas he had formerly thought himself a sort of martyr husband, he now felt quite disgusted with himself, and disposed to

ascribe all the discord to his own hard and captious temper. Could this Moody and Sankey business have anything to do with it? If so, he should feel grateful to these American strangers all his life for it.

The truth is, though he would not for the world have any one know it—he should never hear the end of it among his Parliament House friends—he had gone that day to the noon prayer-meeting in the Assembly Hall—gone, very stealthily, squeezing in among the crowd at a back door, where he comforted himself he should not be seen, and there, seated in a corner, he curiously and critically surveyed the scene. The hall was crowded in every part, the service had just commenced, and as it went on he became strangely interested and affected. Seated near the platform among many others were Helen and Alice, and he held his breath in the effort to catch their voices as the choir joined in the choruses of Mr Sankey's hymns. He was struck with the look of repose on their bright faces. He recalled the expression of his wife's countenance as she had seemed more than once

eager to say something to him, and how, as the words died away on her trembling lips, he, wretch that he was, instead of encouraging her, had, like a bear, stood stern and hard. And only that morning, when in her engaging way she had asked him to come with her to this very place, he had coldly repelled her and refused. His by no means cheerful reflections were cut short as Mr Moody, who was in the chair, rose to speak. At first his manner and mode of speech seemed too free and easy and colloquial for sacred subjects, but this impression was soon removed, and the attention of Douglas was arrested by the manifest honesty and earnestness of the speaker, and by the absence of cant, and of all extravagance or undue sentiment on the part of both speaker and hearers. Douglas became fascinated by his frank and manly expression of his own feelings and experience, and by the singular clearness and vividness of his exhibition of Scripture truth ; while the force and felicity of his illustrations of that truth by examples drawn from personal knowledge, were striking in the ex-

treme. Above all, the affectionate earnestness with which he pressed the offers and invitations of the Gospel upon his hearers was full of the most thrilling pathos. As regarded the matter of Mr Moody's address and his prayers, there was nothing new or strange; it was just the "old, old story;" but there was a power accompanying it of which Douglas had never before been conscious. And when Mr Sankey's soft rich voice poured forth one of his simple hymns, in which a few familiar Scripture phrases were wedded to a simple melody, Douglas felt a swelling in his throat, and a melting at his heart altogether peculiar.


As he revolved these things in his mind, in his quiet study, he tried to pooh-pooh the whole affair as a mere temporary sentiment; but beneath all that was circumstantial and sentimental, he found there was a barbed arrow in his conscience, which all his efforts could not dislodge. The subject of Mr Moody's address that day had been "The Prodigal Son," and he had unfolded and enforced the spiritual meaning of the parable with his usual freshness and power.

certainly destitute of hope
to Him whom he ought to love v
heart and soul and strength and
living on husks! For what is a
world can give—its honour, ri
sures, without God? Only em
doomed to perish with the earth
them.

“Is this really my case?” the
glas. “Can there be any doubt
inward conscience says, ‘Thou a
ungrateful, selfish, without God
out hope. And can it be th
whom I have so disowned and
has yet so loved even me as
own Son to bear my sin and c
my death, that I might be a
His life and glory?”

his heart found expression in the words of the prodigal, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son." And a sweet, unearthly, inexpressible peace took possession of his soul.

As Douglas sat absorbed with his new-born convictions and faith, he was startled by the sound of a strange little tap at his door. That was succeeded by a louder knock, and the next moment Alice stood before him. What a long dreary time it seemed since last she had been in this room, and how painful was the remembrance of the sharp words that had fallen from her lips, and of the threat, alas! too faithfully executed, that she should never trouble him with her unwelcome company there again! But there she now stood, radiant and sweet—more beautiful, he thought, than even in their earlier married days—her fair soft cheeks flushed with emotion, and her blue eyes glistening with a tenderness which he once thought had gone out of them for ever. Her pretty evening dress—his favourite white—suited well her girlishly-slight



Helen Gray.

re. He could have thought it was
el come to minister to him.

She sprang lightly towards him, a
l:

Douglas, I have come to ask you
give me for all—for my unkind, wick
per and ways. Will you forgive m
can you still love me a little?"

Her golden head was on his shoulder.
The strong man bent his pale face o

He did not speak, but a stran
nor was upon him, and she felt his f
eness in the tender pressure of his ar
he folded her to his heart. "My love
own Alice," at last he murmured, as



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